

Project Update: April 2015

Training, Inter-observer Reliability, and Behavioral/Physiological Data Collection



Although we have no tangible results yet, training is complete and data collection is underway. First, it was necessary to identify all adult individuals in each group (~100 macaques). To learn IDs, macaques were followed 4 days a week from dawn to dusk. We differentiated individuals using callosities, crests, nipples, swelling skin, as well as scars and other identifying marks. Once a week we discussed the individuals as a team, updated our notes, drew images, and made comments regarding any discrepancies for future confirmation. On these

same days, we practised the data collection protocols, physiological collection protocols, and reviewed the nuances of macaque behaviour. All assistants passed inter-observer reliability (IOR) with macaque IDs (Cohen's Kappa >99%), but only three assistants passed inter-observer reliability with data (Cohen's Kappa >96%). Regardless, we were still able to begin formal data collection. Finally, we also began collecting fecal samples, but are still testing saliva sample collection methods.

One of my assistants, Yuli, was not able to pass IOR with data collection. I gave her an additional 3 weeks of one-on-one training. During this time, we collected mock focal data together, pausing often to discuss each behavior witnessed. I also had my lead assistant participate in this extra training period to see if a fresh teaching style would be helpful. Unfortunately, Yuli could not grasp the nuances of primate facial cues and decided to seek employment elsewhere. I have already found her replacement and will begin training them on April 15th 2015. We also experienced a problem with our physiological collection protocol, specifically saliva. Although some macaques in these groups had chewed our mango soaked saliva swabs previously, they rejected our recent attempts to collect. We tested four new syrups and are pleased to say that grape/black currant has proved to be a new favorite amongst the macaques. Not only have we successfully collected from both males and females (females were a problem in the past), but also we no longer need to worry about the citrus content of the mango swabs possibly interfering with our cortisol assays.

My direct contact with community involvement has been minimal thus far, however, I have met with Harry Hilser (programme manager of Selamatkan Yaki (SY) - <http://selamatkanyaki.com>) and discussed his plans for SY's Tangkoko Guide Training Workshop to be held in Batu Putih. Harry has held two workshop planning seminars, and I have had representatives at both. The workshop itself is scheduled for April 14th -16th 2015, and I intend to participate in each class in order to assist him with questions relating to macaque behavior. Additionally, I have had several discussions with the local guides about improving their English skills. They were extremely receptive to the idea of free lessons. Thus, I held my first English language class on April 4th 2015 and will continue to do so once a week for the remainder of my time in



Tangkoko. Finally, the director of Tangkoko Conservation Education, Mathilde Chanvin will be visiting Indonesia soon and I intend to setup a schedule that will allow me to participate in educational outreach at local schools more frequently.

